

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 021029Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9387

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

USIA WASHDC

DIRNSA WASHDC

13AF CLARK AB PHIL/OC

13AF UTAPAO/CV

COMUSMACTHAI BKK TH

UNCLAS BANGKOK 4737

USIA PASS IEA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MPOL, MARR, MILI, TH

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S PUBLIC COMMENTS ON U.S. REDUC-
TIONS IN THAILAND

1. ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILY THE NATION REPORTED TODAY MARCH 2, THAT FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN ON MARCH 1 TOLD NEWSMEN THAT CABINET SESSION MARCH 2 WILL CONSIDER "AN EMERGENCY FUND" OF \$5 MILLION TO RUN MILITARY FACILITIES BEING TURNED OVER TO THE RTG BY THE U.S.

2. REVIEWING MAJOR FACILITIES, NATION QUOTED FOREIGN MINISTER AS SAYING RTAF HAS SOUGHT PERMISSION TO MAKE KORAT ITS HEADQUARTERS, COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY "WILL BE ASKED TO DECLARE UTAPAO AN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT BE USING THIS BASE FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL," AND UDORN AIRBASE WILL BE TURNED INTO AN AIRCRAFT
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REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP.

3. IN ANOTHER MEETING WITH THE PRESS MARCH 1, THE FOREIGN MINISTER TALKED FURTHER WITH NEWSMEN ABOUT U.S. REDUCTIONS HERE. THE FOLLOWING IS AN OFFICIAL USIS TRANSLATION.

4. BEGIN TEXT

REPORTER: WILL THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT OF POLICY?

CHATCHAI: THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE AT ALL, MARCH 20 IS THE TIME LIMIT FIXED IN OUR STATEMENT OF POLICY FOR WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS TO BE COMPLETED.

REPORTER: AMERICAN AUTHORITIES HAVE REQUESTED FOR 4,000 MEN TO CONTINUE REMAINING HERE...

CHATCHAI: NO AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED YET REGARDING THE NUMBER.

REPORTER: ABOUT WHEN WILL AGREEMENT BE REACHED?

CHATCHAI: I THINK THAT AGREEMENT WILL BE REACHED SOMETIME NEXT WEEK BECAUSE MARCH 20 IS DRAWING NEAR. NO PROBLEM SHOULD BE FACED BECAUSE WE HAVE ISSUED A STATEMENT ALREADY.

REPORTER: DO YOU FEEL THAT THEIR REQUEST FOR 4,000 MEN TO REMAIN HERE IS TOO LARGE A NUMBER?

CHATCHAI: WHEREVER DID YOU GET THE FIGURE OF 4,000 FROM SINCE NO TALKS ON THE SUBJECT HAVE BEEN HELD AT ALL. IT IS ONLY SPECULATION AND GUESSWORK ON THE PART OF THIS AND THAT PERSON.

REPORTER: WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL VIEW? DO YOU FEEL THAT 4,000 MEN IS TOO LARGE A NUMBER?

CHATCHAI: NO COMMENT. IT IS NECESSARY TO KNOW FIRST WHERE THEY WILL BE STATIONED AND WHETHER THEY WILL BE CONCERNED WITH HELPING TRAIN OUR ARMED FORCES. THEN WE MUST STUDY THEIR NUMBER AND CONSULTATIONS MUST BE HELD WITH THE MINISTRY

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OF DEFENSE. YOU MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT WE HAVE THREE ARMED FORCES -- ARMY, NAVY, AND AIR FORCE. IT IS THEREFORE OF IMPORTANCE FOR US TO CONSIDER WHETHER THEIR NUMBER IS SUFFICIENT AND IN PROPER PROPORTION TO HELP TRAIN OUR ARMED FORCES.

REPORTER: AND WHAT ABOUT VARIOUS CONDITIONS WE WILL DEMAND?

CHATCHAI: THAT SUBJECT HAS NOT BEEN DISCUSSED IN TALKS AT

ALL.

REPORTER: BUT WHAT ABOUT CONDITIONS SHOULD THEY REMAIN HERE?

CHATCHAI: THERE ARE NO NEW CONDITIONS. THE ORIGINAL CONDITIONS IN THE AGREEMENT SIGNED IN 1950, WHEN WE SENT TROOPS TO FIGHT IN KOREA, WILL BE USED.

REPORTER: WHAT CONDITIONS WILL THERE BE SHOULD THEY CONTINUE BEING STATIONED IN RAMASUN AND KO KHA, FOR INSTANCE?

CHATCHAI: THERE ARE NO CONDITIONS WHATSOEVER BECAUSE ALL THOSE SITES MUST BE TURNED OVER TO THAILAND. THEY ARE THAI PROPERTY, BUT AMERICANS WILL REMAIN HERE IN ORDER TO HELP TRAIN US IN TECHNIQUES IN THE USE OF EQUIPMENT. THAT IS ALL.

REPORTER: WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THEY DO NOT TURN THOSE SITES OVER TO US?

CHATCHAI: THERE IS NO QUESTION OR PROBLEM ABOUT THAT. OF COURSE THEY MUST TURN THEM OVER TO US.

REPORTER: WILL NEGOTIATIONS BE HELD AGAIN BETWEEN THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES?

CHATCHAI: NEGOTIATIONS ARE HELD ALL THE TIME. OFFICIALS OF WORKING GROUPS ARE WORKING TOGETHER ALL THE TIME. THERE IS NO PROBLEM AT ALL.

4. COMMENT FOLLOWS SEPTEL. FYI, THE FOREIGN MINISTER TALKED WITH NEWSMEN AGAIN THIS MORNING ABOUT U.S. REDUCTIONS. NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND HAS SCHEDULED PRESS CONFERENCE LATER TODAY ON SAME SUBJECT. WILL SEND TRANSCRIPTS WHEN AVAILABLE.
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